DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 109 243 TM 004 706

AUTHOR Doherty, Victor W.
TITLE Framework of Organization and Policy for Evaluation in a Decentralized School District.
PUB DATE [Apr 75]
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, D.C., March 30-April 3, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Organization; *Decentralization; Educational Policy; Evaluation Methods; Professional Personnel; *Program Evaluation; *School Districts; *School Superintendents; Staff Role; Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Portland Oregon Public Schools

ABSTRACT

The Portland public school system is decentralized and has three administrative areas, each headed by a superintendent. Each area is provided with an evaluation administrator, and a central evaluation administrator, and a central evaluation department is also maintained. Area evaluation is regarded as an essential function which each superintendent maintains for the improvement of programs in his area. Central evaluation audits the relative effectiveness of area programs and implements the district superintendent's ultimate responsibility for the quality of programs. Model policies for evaluation have been established in three fields in which central and area evaluators have encountered problems that needed to be resolved. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

Framework of Organization and Policy for Evaluation in a Decentralized School District

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

By

Dr. Victor W. Doherty
Portland Public Schools
631 N.E. Clackamas Street
Portland, Oregon
97208

ED109243

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C., April 1, 1975.

Because of the trend toward decentralization of large school systems, and the organizational problems that attend decentralization, it should be useful to report on the organizational and policy framework for evaluation developed in one such district.

Organizational Framework

Allocation of evaluation functions in the Portland School District reflects the basic policies of the decentralized organization. Responsibility for planning, operating, and evaluating instructional programs rests with the three decentralized subdistrict superintendents. These functions are delegated to create as much autonomy, diversity, and competitive creativity within the District as possible, while maintaining administrative units of sufficient size that each will still have resources to perform these essential functions effectively. Each decentralized subdistrict has an evaluation administrator on its own staff, with responsibility to provide the direct evaluation of instructional programs.

On the other hand, the Superintendent of Schools assumes ultimate accountability for the success of all programs developed and implemented

TM 004 206

within each decentralized subdistrict and exercises that accountability by monitoring independently the effectiveness of the programs maintained by them. The Central Evaluation Department carries out this function.

The Central Evaluation Department develops information systems and auditing programs that provide information about the functioning of all important programs and operations of the subdistricts. It also establishes standards and procedures to insure that evaluation done by subdistricts is useful and interpretable to the Superintendent. The function of the subdistrict evaluation administrators is to directly evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of instructional programs of the schools. Finally, it might be noted that the principle of decentralization that governs the relationship between the Central and Area Evaluation Departments is to some extent repeated in the relationship between the Area Evaluation Office and school principals. Each subdistrict has a program which permits schools to apply for funds for instructional improvement, and as a part of the application, school principals must specify the manner in which the improvement is to be evaluated. Thus, the principal himself is charged with an evaluation responsibility, and the subdistrict evaluation administrator must provide standards and guidelines that will insure that these evaluations are useful and interpretable to the subdistrict and district superintendents.

One special problem that surfaced in this decentralized evaluation program is the difficulty of achieving data comparability where different testing programs are maintained by each subdistrict. This became a matter of concern in analysis of achievement test results, and also where either District or specially funded projects involve more than one subdistrict and comparative

performance between subdistricts must be assessed. Since each subdistrict maintains its own testing program using different tests and different types of test scores, it became evident that a minimum uniform testing program that provides comparable data across subdistricts is required. It also became evident that any experimental program or new project that involves more than one subdistrict, in which the goals are the same and the need to evaluate is uniform, requires a procedure for establishing agreement on the goals of such programs and upon common measurement procedures and instrumentation.

The following policies were arrived at with respect to a city-wide testing program and cross-Area program evaluations. Some of the city-wide testing policies, it will be noted, address matters that are not restricted to decentralized districts.

Testing Program Policies

The policies agreed on between the Superintendent, subdistrict superintendents, and central and subdistrict evaluators that relate to testing are basically as follows:

1. City-wide tests will be administered in the fall of each year in grades 4, 8, and 11. These tests initially will be limited to basic skills, with areas of basic skills designated by the central and area curriculum personnel of the District.

2. Subdistricts will maintain additional testing programs as required to satisfy their respective evaluation requirements.

3. Developmental work will continue with the Rasch Model to determine if the following capabilities can be provided:

(a) Ability to test students in the same grade with different test forms to assure testing appropriate to each student's developmental level, but still permit combining and averaging of Rasch scale scores for research and evaluation purposes.

(b) Ability to compare results of achievement across different testing programs within the District (by linking items, a part of the Rasch procedure).

(c) Ability to compare results of achievement among school districts which would cooperate in administering linking items and pooling item information so all could relate to a common scale.

Note: To the extent the above three capabilities are proved, each will be incorporated into the official testing policies and processes of the District.

4. Standards of performance will be set for basic skills tests (at grades 4, 8, and 11 initially) to identify students needing additional work in these skills.

5. The city-wide testing program will operate on an all-student rather than sampling basis. Mean test results are needed for each class in each subject, and sampling would not permit this. If student sampling were attempted, complete class data could not be provided each teacher, which could adversely affect teacher motivation to test and student motivation to perform.

In addition to these basic policies, central and subdistrict evaluators have agreed on the following directions in testing:

1. Development of a goal-item bank which will permit storage and retrieval of goals (learning outcome statements) and test items that have been specifically

designed to measure these goals. Items will be Rasch-calibrated when possible. Ultimately, it may be possible from this bank to put tests together for whatever goals are selected and to secure Rasch score estimates of total test performance on the items used. As the bank develops, capabilities for measurement will be extended into all areas of instruction.

2. Measurement at the high school level will be shifted from general tests of academic development to tests that are specific to courses offered. Specific course tests, based upon identification of goals by cross-subdistrict curriculum committees, will provide a basis for course and program evaluation (where content of such courses in common to 4 or more high schools), and the goal-item bank referred to above will be a resource for developing tests and securing evaluative data for all other courses.

Cross-Subdistrict Program Evaluations

Policies relating to evaluation of programs that are common to two or all three subdistricts, and for which the Superintendent desires to have comparable data are as follows:

(a) Method of identifying common goals across subdistricts. Joint committees representing each subdistrict shall carry out the identification of common goals. Membership shall be based on recommendations of the three curriculum administrators, and the committees' work should be supervised by a curriculum administrator or specialist agreed on by the three curriculum administrators.

(b) Method of selecting instruments. Instruments shall be selected by the same curriculum committee that identified the common goals using criteria developed by the Central Evaluation Department and approved by

the subdistrict evaluation administrators. The committee should receive technical instruction and support from a central and/or subdistrict evaluation administrator.

(c) Type of instrumentation. Selection of the type of test will be in terms of the purpose of the evaluation. Summative evaluation of new or experimental programs will usually require a norm-referenced test that yields a total test or set of sub-test scores, prefereably standardized locally to insure better knowledge of the norming population. Formative evaluation will usually require a criterion-referenced test that yields information on specific goals. The basic element in the selection in either case is an analysis of the validity of the test under consideration in terms of the goals of the program.

(d) Type of cost measure. Cost measures shall separately identify operating costs (including personnel and supplies), amortized equipment costs, and amotrized capital outlay costs. All costs shall be expressed both as total and per pupil.

(e) Type of score. Normative test data shall be expressed in terms of raw scores or standard scores where evaluations involve comparison groups. Criterion referenced data shall be reported as percentages of students currently answering each item (group) or percentage of items correct in relation to total possible for each goal (group or individual).

(f) Type of evaluation and balance (formative, summative). Evaluation of new or experimental programs shall stress summative evaluation. Such evaluation shall, however, be accompanied by such data descriptive of program and process as may be needed to interpret the success or lack of

the program, and to make possible its replication, if desired, to produce similar results. On-course correction resulting from formative evaluations must be included in such descriptions.

(g) Format of report. The format of the report shall consist of the following points:

1. General (introductory) description of the new or experimental program, its rationale, methods, materials.
2. A statement of the goals of the program.
3. A statement of the questions evaluation is supposed to answer.
4. A statement describing the evaluation methodology used in securing answers to each question.
5. Evaluation of program implementation -- data on management, support, instruction.
6. Summative evaluation data.
7. Analysis of costs.
8. Conclusions
9. Recommendations

That subdistricts be encouraged to supplement Central evaluation of programs that extend across more than one subdistrict, but that plans for such supplemental study be checked out with central evaluation to insure proper coordination and procedure.

Summary Remarks

Evaluation capabilities are provided each subdistrict so that the total functions of management, including evaluation, are under the direction of the

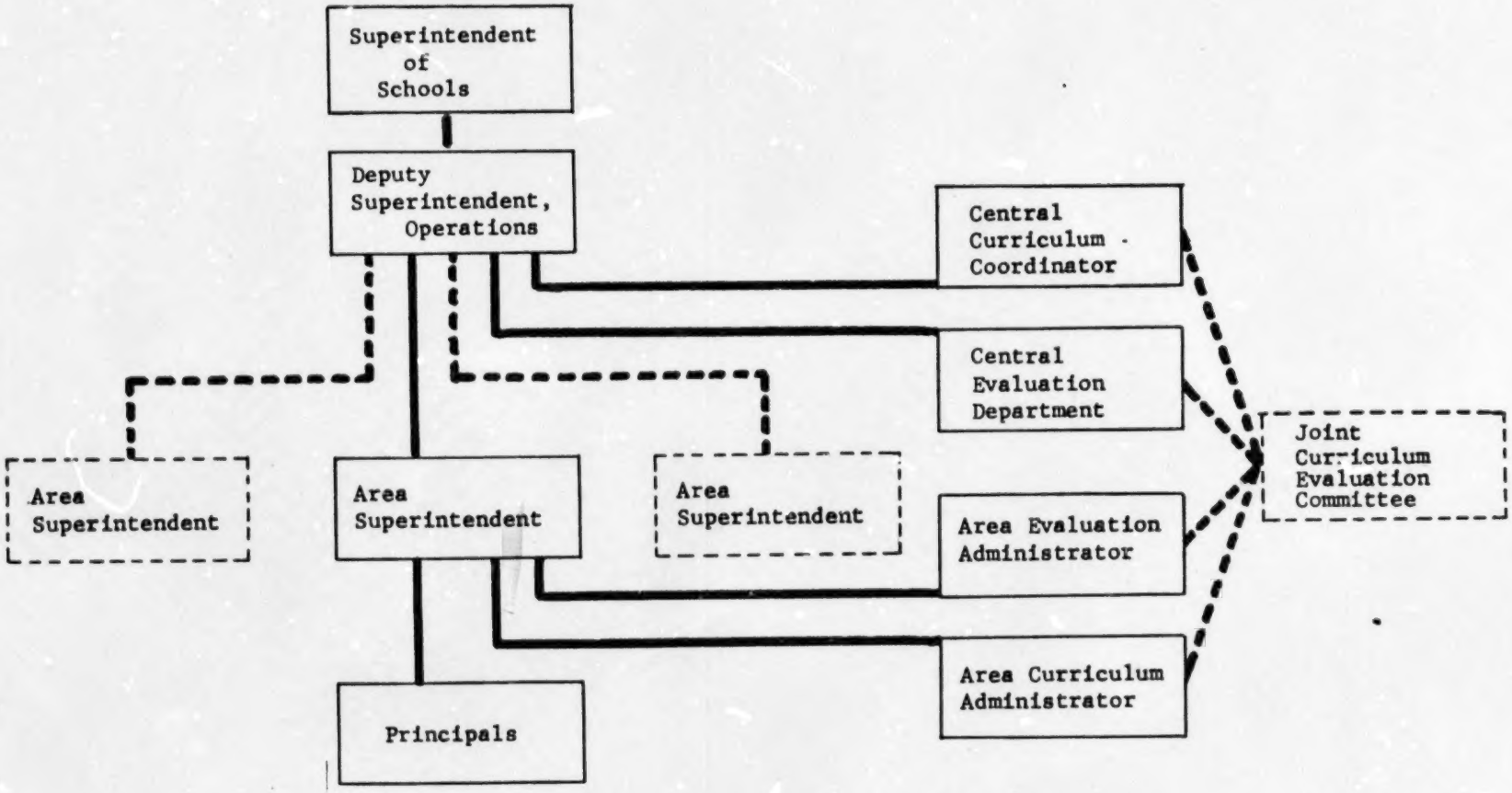
the subdistrict superintendent. This helps to assure the autonomy and organizational integrity of the decentralized subdistrict. By controlling evaluation of its own programs, each subdistrict controls the most essential tool management possesses for insuring its own quality and proper functioning.

Central evaluation plays the role of tapping into all programs of management, support (including subdistrict evaluation), and instruction to determine if these programs are producing the outcomes they exist to produce. This is based on the assumption that final responsibility for the success of all programs rests with the District superintendent, and that central auditing is required to determine the relative success of the three autonomous subdistricts.

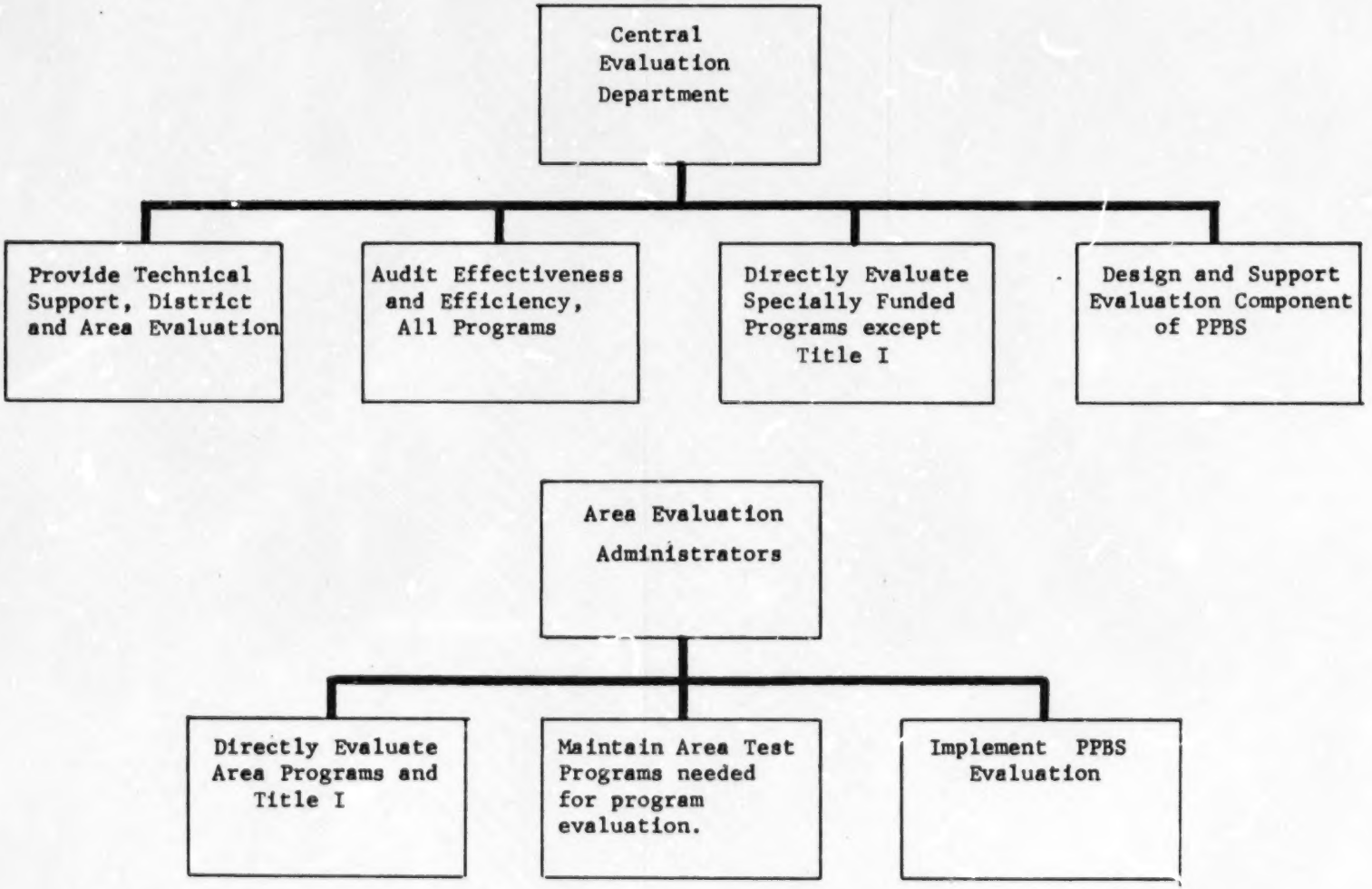
The preceding description of the organizational and policy contexts in which central and subdistrict evaluators fulfill their mutually supportive responsibilities can serve as a model for decentralization of the evaluation function.

Completing the organizational framework is the informal, but very essential "Joint Curriculum-Evaluation Committee," comprised of subdistrict and district evaluation personnel and subdistrict and district curriculum personnel. The size of this group is manageable, since there is no central supervising staff. Each of the three areas has a curriculum adninistrator and they are joined by the central assistant superintendent who coordinates any joint curriculum planning required in the District. Meetings of this group are held monthly, and they are invaluable in coordinating the work of curriculum and evaluation.

ORGANIZATION FOR EVALUATION (DECENTRALIZED DISTRICT)



FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION


Central Evaluation Department
Provide Technical Support, District and Area Evaluation
Audit Effectiveness and Efficiency, All Programs
Directly Evaluate Specially Funded Programs except Title I
Design and Support Evaluation Component of PPBS
Area Evaluation Administrators
Directly Evaluate Area Programs and Title I
Maintain Area Test Programs needed for program evaluation.
Implement PPBS Evaluation